

Dear Education Committee

I am writing with my opinion on elements of HB 5322; I am a 20+ year public school social worker and I have a long term vested interest in serving Connecticut students and families.

Regards to home visits; the legislature Should not have anything to do with this. Home visits can be very effective, but there are other ways to connect with parents to include in school meetings, remote video meets and phone calls. I believe it is our practice to determine in the same way as other professionals decide how to best serve their clients. The NASW Code of Ethics drives our practice and if a home visit is in the best interest of a specific student, then it will be conducted; without legislative intervention being needed.

Regards to therapeutic work being done by individuals with bachelor's degrees only ; lots of this going on already with Covid money. I am not averse to having more support for kids, but students are not always getting mental health intervention from trained professionals . It leads to these staff talking about things they are not necessarily trained to intervene with. It can also become interfering when they become assigned to kids we are already working with. There is not a consistent and coordinated system to make these types of services work efficiently and in the best interests of kids. There are reasons why masters degrees are required for certain types of professional services; provision of mental health services by individuals with bachelor's degrees is not best practice.

Thank you for working to improve education programming; I appreciate your consideration of my thoughts and experience.

Respectfully

Gary Cesca, LCSW